

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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P R 141619Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9041
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 09956

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1
TAGS: PGOV, WB, GW, GE, UR, US, UK, FR
SUBJECT: EAST GERMAN AND SOVIET COMMENTS ON CDU RALLY,
GDR ACTIONS AFFECTING BERLIN, AND ALLIED
FLAG PATROLS

REFS: BONN 9908

BEGIN SUMMARY: GDR AND SOVIET OFFICIALS HAVE TAKEN
A MODERATE TONE DURING TWO RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH
FRG OFFICIALS IN EAST BERLIN. ON THE SUBJECT OF THE
JUNE 16 CDU/JUNGE UNION RALLY, SEIDEL OF THE GDR
FOREIGN MINISTRY EXPRESSED THE ASSUMPTION THAT PARTI-
CIPANTS WOULD AVOID ANY PROVOCATIVE ACTION ON THE
TRANSIT WAYS, BUT REITERATED THAT THE GDR'S ACTIONS
WOULD BE "DEPENDENT UPON THE DEGREE OF PROVOCATION."
BOTH SEIDEL AND SOVIET MINISTER KHOTULEV CALLED THE
ALLIED FLAG PATROLS "IRRITATING," AND, IN AN EXPLANA-
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TION OF THE SOVIET LEGAL VIEW, KHOTULEV REFERRED TO
THE FLAG PATROLS AND TO ALLIED ACCESS IN GENERAL TO
EAST BERLIN AS "PRACTICES" WHICH HAD NO LEGAL BASIS;
HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT ALLIED ACCESS TO EAST BERLIN
WOULD NOT BE PUT INTO QUESTION. SEIDEL CHARACTERIZED
THE PRESENT BERLIN AIR REGIME AS IRRITATING; KHOTULEV,
AS LEGALLY "DUBIOUS." BOTH ASSURED THE FRG OFFICIALS,

HOWEVER, THAT THEY WERE NOT CONTEMPLATING ATTEMPTS
TO CHANGE IT. END SUMMARY

1. FOLLOWING IS AN INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF A GERMAN (GAUS)
REPORTING CABLE DATED JUNE 8, COPIES OF WHICH WERE
DISTRIBUTED BY THE FRG REP IN THE BONN GROUP ON
JUNE 13.

BEGIN TEXT

A. IN A CONVERSATION WITH ME ON JUNE 6, DIVISION
CHIEF SEIDEL OF THE GDR FOREIGN MINISTRY ONCE AGAIN
EXPRESSED THE GDR'S EXPECTATION THAT EVERYTHING MIGHT
BE DONE BY OUR SIDE TO AVOID SUCH A BURDENING OF
RELATIONS AS COULD RESULT FROM THE ANNOUNCED CDU RALLY
IN BERLIN (WEST) ON THE EVE OF JUNE 17. I VIGOROUSLY
REPEATED THE POSITION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN
THIS MATTER.

B. SEIDEL'S OBVIOUS DESIRE TO AVOID ANY HARSHNESS
(OF TONE) WAS CONSPICUOUS. THUS HE SAID HE ASSUMED
THAT THOSE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CDU RALLY TRAVELLING
IN PRIVATE CARS WOULD CERTAINLY NOT HOLD ANY SIGNS
OUT OF WINDOWS OR HAVE SIMILAR MATERIALS LYING ON
THE BACK SEATS. THE REACTION OF THE GDR, AND THERE
CERTAINLY WOULD BE ONE, WOULD BE DEPENDENT UPON THE
DEGREE OF PROVOCATION.

C. DISCUSSING BERLIN QUESTIONS IN GENERAL, SEIDEL
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SAID THAT THE GDR HAD ONLY DONE WHAT HAD BEEN NECESSARY
AND OVERDUE IN ITS WELL-KNOWN MEASURES OF THE PAST
MONTHS (DISCONTINUANCE OF THE "OFFICIAL GAZETTE FOR
GREATER BERLIN," ETC.). HIS SIDE HAD NO FURTHER-
REACHING INTENTIONS AT THE TIME, BECAUSE ONE WOULD
CERTAINLY NOT WANT TO DO ANYTHING WHICH COULD HARM
OTHER INTERESTS OF THE GDR. ASKED WHY THEN THE
QUESTION OF THE WESTERN ALLIES' PATROLS HAD BEEN
RAISED BY THE SOVIET SIDE, SEIDEL ANSWERED THAT THESE
PATROLS WERE IN FACT EXTREMELY TROUBLESOME (LAESTIG)
AND IRRITATING (STOEREND). COMPLETELY ASIDE FROM THE
LEGAL ASPECT, THE PATROLS WERE A SOURCE OF IRRITATION
BECAUSE OF FREQUENT TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS AND BAD BEHAVIOR.
AS A FURTHER EXAMPLE OF "IRRITATING MATTERS", SEIDEL
THEN MENTIONED THE AIR TRAFFIC REGIME; HE NEVERTHELESS

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EXPRESSLY ADDED THAT NO REPEAT NO MOVE WOULD BE MADE
AGAINST THIS.

D. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE MINISTER OF THE
SOVIET EMBASSY HERE, KHOTULEV, A CLOSE CO-WORKER OF
ABRASIMOV AND AN EXPERIENCED BERLIN EXPERT, TOOK A
POSITION VERY SIMILAR TO SEIDEL'S IN A CONVERSATION
WITH MY DEPUTY THE NEXT DAY. KHOTULEV ALSO STROVE
TO BE ESPECIALLY OBJECTIVE AND TO AVOID ANY POLEMICS.
HE DID NOT REPEAT NOT MENTION ANY CONTROVERSIAL
CURRENT PROBLEMS SUCH AS THE RALLY ON THE EVE OF JUNE
17 AND THE INCLUSION OF BERLIN (WEST) IN THE LEGIS-
LATION ON THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS.

E. KHOTULEV DISAGREED THAT THE EAST HAD HARDENED
ITS BERLIN POLICY. THE LATEST STEPS TAKEN BY THE GDR
WERE NOT DIRECTED AGAINST THE RIGHTS OF THE WESTERN
ALLIES IN WEST BERLIN--WHICH THE GDR, AS IS KNOWN, ALSO
DOES NOT DISPUTE--BUT WERE SIMPLY AN EXPRESSION OF

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THE LEGAL POSITION OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GDR

WELL-KNOWN FOR YEARS, THAT THE FOUR-POWER STATUS HAS APPLIED EXCLUSIVELY TO WEST BERLIN SINCE THE END OF THE OCCUPATION OF THE FORMER EASTERN SECTOR OF BERLIN. CERTAIN "PRACTICES" OF THE WESTERN ALLIES IN THE CAPITAL OF THE GDR, WHICH WERE NOT RIGHTS, WERE SIMPLY TOLERATED AND THEREFORE DID NOT CONTRADICT THE EASTERN LEGAL POSITION. KHOTULEV SAID THAT THE PATROLS WERE IRRITATING (STOERTEN). THEY HAD NO LEGAL BASIS AND NO JUSTIFICATION. THEY WERE SIMPLY A DEMONSTRATION OF RIGHTS WHICH HAD LONG SINCE BECOME UNTENABLE (HINFAELLIG). KHOTULEV ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE FREE ACCESS OF ALLIED PERSONNEL "INTO THE CAPITAL OF THE GDR" WOULD NOT BE PUT INTO QUESTION, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS ALSO NO LONGER ANY LEGAL BASIS FOR THAT.

F. JUST AS SURELY, THE AIR TRAFFIC OF THE WESTERN ALLIES TO WEST BERLIN WOULD NOT BE PUT INTO QUESTION. OF COURSE, THE PRESENT PRACTICE IN THE LIGHT OF THE POST-WAR AGREEMENTS WAS "DUBIOUS." BUT THIS WAS A "VERY COMPLEX PROBLEM," WHICH WOULD BE BETTER LEFT ALONE. THE WESTERN ALLIES HAD BEEN TOLD THIS ON APPROPRIATE OCCASIONS IN RECENT YEARS.

G. ON THE QUESTION OF THE TRAVEL OF SOVIET OCCUPATION TROOPS INTO WEST BERLIN, KHOTULEV SAID THAT THESE TRIPS (CHIEFLY TO THE TIERGARTEN MONUMENT AND SPANDAU PRISON) WERE PART OF THE CONTINUING "RESPONSIBILITIES" IN WEST BERLIN. THUS, THE SOVIET SIDE--UNLIKE THE WEST--DID NOT SPEAK IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES," BUT EXCLUSIVELY OF "RESPONSIBILITIES".

END TEXT

2. A POLITICAL JOURNALIST HERE HAS TOLD US THAT AN
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OFFICIAL OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY LAST NIGHT ALSO TOOK A VERY MODERATE LINE REGARDING THE JUNE 16 MEETING. THE SOVIET OFFICIAL SAID THAT NOTHING WOULD BE DONE IF THE TRAVELLERS TO THE MEETING WENT LIKE "ORDINARY TOURISTS." SOMETHING WOULD ONLY BE DONE IF THEY WENT IN BUSSES OR IF THEY BEHAVED IN A PROVOCATIVE MANNER.

3. THE SAME SOVIET OFFICIAL, ACCORDING TO THE POLITICAL JOURNALIST, SOUNDED MUCH FIRMER WITH REGARD TO THE QUESTION OF ALLIED PATROLS IN EAST BERLIN. HE SAID THIS PROBLEM HAD NOT BEEN SOLVED AND THAT IT WAS AN IMPORTANT AND EVEN BASIC ISSUE.

HE SAID THE US COULD NOT ON THE ONE HAND HAVE AN EMBASSY IN THE GDR AND ON THE OTHER HAND RUN UNCONTROLLED PATROLS. THE SOVIET OFFICIAL SUGGESTED CUTTING THE NUMBER OF PATROLS IN HALF. HE INSISTED THE ISSUE WAS STILL VERY MUCH ON THE AGENDA.

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4. COMMENT: THE GAUS CABLE WAS, AS REPORTED IN REFTEL, GIVEN ALLIED REPS DURING A BONN GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE JUNE 16 CDU/JUNGE UNION RALLY IN WEST BERLIN ON THE OCCASION OF THE "DAY OF GERMAN UNITY". WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO READ MUCH ONE WAY OR THE OTHER ABOUT GDR INTENTIONS CONCERNING THAT RALLY FROM GAUS' REPORT OF SEIDEL'S CONSPICUOUS CONSTRAINT AND KHOTULEV'S FAILURE EVEN TO MENTION THE RALLY IN DISCUSSING BERLIN PROBLEMS. THE KHOTULEV CONVERSATION WITH GAUS' DEPUTY TOOK PLACE ON JUNE 7, TWO DAYS BEFORE KHOTULEV RAISED THE JUNE 16 MEETING WITH THE FRENCH MINISTER IN WEST BERLIN.

5. MORE INTERESTING, IN OUR VIEW, IS THE FACT THAT GAUS AND HIS DEPUTY--APPARENTLY AT THEIR INITIATIVE-- ARE DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT OF THE SOVIET THREAT TO

ALLIED FLAG PATROLS WITH EAST GERMAN AND SOVIET OFFICIALS. BOTH SEIDEL AND KHOTULEV APPEAR TO HAVE

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FOLLOWED THE STANDARD SOVIET LINE ON THE SUBJECT, INCLUDING KHOTULEV'S STATEMENT THAT OTHER FORMS OF ALLIED ACCESS TO EAST BERLIN WERE NOT BEING PUT INTO QUESTION. WE DO NOT RECALL HAVING PREVIOUSLY HEARD, HOWEVER, A DIRECT SOVIET ASSERTION THAT THERE WAS NO LEGAL BASIS FOR SUCH ACCESS--ALTHOUGH SUCH AN ASSERTION IS A LOGICAL EXTENSION OF THE CLAIM THAT QUADRIPARTITE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES NO LONGER EXTEND TO EAST BERLIN.

6. IT STRIKES US AS NOTEWORTHY AND FAINTLY OMINOUS THAT BOTH SEIDEL AND KHOTULEV MENTIONED THE AIR CORRIDOR REGIME. THEIR ASSURANCES THAT THERE IS NO INTENT TO INTERFERE WITH THE PRESENT REGIME ARE PROBABLY TRUE FOR NOW, EVEN THOUGH IT DOUBTLESS REMAINS A LONG-TERM GDR OBJECTIVE TO ELIMINATE THIS, LIKE OTHER, RESTRAINTS ON GDR SOVEREIGNTY. THE SEIDEL AND KHOTULEV REMARKS AT LEAST MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE TOPIC IS CURRENTLY ON THEIR MINDS.

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